



Exploring a Whole Understanding of Public Policy Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the dichotomies and intersections of public interest, evaluation studies, and policy changes, so as to provide policy evaluators with substantial understanding at both a conceptual and a comprehensive practice level. This research uses a type of research in the form of library research. Sources of data obtained from relevant literature, such as books, journals, or scientific articles related to the selected topic. The results of the research in this article show that the views of experts are focused on how the dynamics of policy issues vary. The main challenges in evaluation studies include the uncertainty of policy objectives, causality relationships, spread of policy influence, difficulty in obtaining data, and official resistance. Policy changes influenced by proposals for new policies may overlap, at least in part, with existing programs. Policy may create conditions that require change because of inadequate or conflicting effects.

INTRODUCTION

Development is an activity carried out by the government, the community, and the private sector (Disnar & Firman, 2019). Development activities are carried out simultaneously and aim to accelerate the fulfillment of public needs from all aspects, including welfare (Afandi & Warjio, 2015). However, development requires clear rules to provide guidelines for its implementation, so that the development process has certain limits without having to exceed the planned goals. This is in line with the meaning of public policy which is correlated with efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of government activities. Therefore, policy evaluation is a definite requirement to measure all weaknesses in policy implementation and the various impacts resulting from a policy (Bajari et al., 2022).

Policy evaluation is seen as a functional activity [4]. This means that policy evaluation is not only carried out at the final stage, but for the entire policy process. Furthermore, policy evaluation can be distinguished into two different tasks, namely: (a) to determine the consequences of a policy by describing its impact, and (b) to assess the success or failure of a policy based on standards or criteria. previously set.

Conceptually, policy boils down to the framework of government action in a system, which includes public participation, varied interests, and socio-political economic dimensions (Haerul et al., 2016). With the complexity of this policy, evaluation holds an important factor in the timeline of a public policy. so that an analysis of the concept of policy evaluation needs to be carried out in order to provide direction on policies to achieve their goals. This article aims to analyze the dichotomies and intersections of public interest, evaluation studies, and policy changes, so as to provide policy evaluators with substantial understanding at both a conceptual and a comprehensive practice level.

THEORETICAL REVIEWS

Problems and Public Interest

Dunn said that public problems have characteristics (Dunn, 2015). First, interdependence between various problems. A public problem is not a problem that stands alone, but is interrelated between one problem and another. For example, the problem of unemployment is related to the problem of crime, or the problem of poverty, and so on. An interdependent problem system requires policy analysts to use a holistic approach in solving problems and trying to find and even know the root causes. Second, the subjectivity of policy issues. Policy issues are the result of thinking in the context of a particular environment. Therefore, a phenomenon that is considered a problem in a certain environment may not be a problem for another environment. For example: Household waste in rural areas is not a problem, but on the contrary, household waste is a complicated problem for families in big cities that needs to be taken seriously and involves all parties, including the government. Third, artificiality; that is, a phenomenon is considered a problem because of the human desire to change the situation. For example, a low per capita income in an area is a problem because the government wants to improve people's welfare. Given these

characteristics, Dunn has provided guidelines for evaluators to determine public problems that might be handled using government policies.

Dynamics of Policy Issues

Generally, the solutions to public problems are always changing (Subarsono, 2011). The same problem may not necessarily be solved using the same approach if the environmental context is different. Likewise, the same problem may not necessarily be solved with the same policy if the time is different. For example, the choice of a development paradigm that is oriented towards economic growth is more appropriate for addressing the problems of the Indonesian nation such as poverty in 1967, but this paradigm is not appropriate to be used as a development model today, because the social environment context is far different. In the 2000s, a development approach model that prioritized respect for human rights and democracy was seen as more appropriate than a development approach that prioritized economic growth.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a type of research in the form of library research. Literature study is related to theoretical studies and several references that cannot be separated from scientific literature (Darmalaksana, 2020). The library research steps that will be carried out in this study include preparing equipment, compiling a work bibliography, managing time, reading and making research notes (Zed, 2008). In this study, data sources were obtained from relevant literature such as books, journals or scientific articles related to the selected topic. The data collection technique used in this library research is to find data about things or variables in the form of notes, books, papers or articles, journals and so on. The research instrument used by researchers is a check-list list of research material classifications based on the focus of the study, writing schemes/maps, and research note formats. The data analysis technique used in this library research is content analysis. This aims to maintain the immutability of the review process and prevent and overcome misinformation (human misunderstandings that can occur due to lack of knowledge of researchers or lack of literature writers). This research report is prepared on the principles of simplicity and convenience. This principle was chosen considering the limited ability of researchers who have not been able to conduct an in-depth and more detailed literature review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems in Evaluation Studies

In evaluation studies, there are several obstacles and problems that generally occur. According to Winarno (2008), problems in public policy evaluation studies include uncertainty and unclear policy objectives, evaluations are not carried out systematically, so it is difficult to test causality that impacts are indeed caused by these policies, policy impacts usually spread beyond policy objectives, difficulties in obtaining data primary, available

secondary data is often invalid, resistance of program officials/responsible who feel they are being watched, evaluations tend to see less impact or are less valid, but prefer to measure and evaluate output only (Muttaqin, 2022b; Winarno, 2008).

Furthermore, according to Agustino (2017), several problems related to the evaluation of public policies are presented.

1. *Uncertainty of Policy Objectives*

When the direction of a policy is unclear, confusing, or distorted, as is often the case. So in determining the continuation to be achieved becomes a task that is difficult and often frustrating. For example in the Urban Model program. Its goals are living in the community, rebuilding slums and the dilapidated, repairing homes, earning and cultural opportunities, reducing crime and crime, reducing dependence on welfare, and maintaining historic buildings. No priority is shown for these various objectives. This is further exacerbated by different preferences and perceptions. Officials who have different positions in the policy system, such as legislators and administrators, or national and local officials, may define differently, according to the law, and come to different conclusions about program implementation, complicating the setting of policy objectives.

2. *Causality Relationship*

Systematic evaluation must be able to show changes in real life conditions as a result of policy activities. However, the fact that activity A is carried out and condition B is developed does not mean that there is a partial relationship as a result. Something can happen with or without policies. To further illustrate the problem of determining partial consequences, the case of criminal control policy will be taken. The aim or at least one of the objectives of this policy is the prevention of crime. Countermeasures here can be defined as prevention of actions that can actually occur. The question: Does that someone who has not committed theft mean that he or she has been effectively prevented by the policy regarding the act? Of course the answer, first, depends on whether he is inclined to commit theft. If it turns out to be so predisposed, then could that possibility be prevented by trial and punishment, by other factors such as family influence, or by lack of opportunity? As this should be pointed out, determining the partial consequences of an action, especially complex social and economic problems, is a difficult task to undertake.

3. *The Influence of Policy Spreads*

Policy implementation can have an impact on a group outside the policy target group. A welfare program can have an impact not only on the poor but also on others such as taxpayers, community officials, and possibly low income people who do not enjoy welfare outcomes. The impact on this group can be symbolic or material. Taxpayers may complain that "some of their hard-earned money will be used to help lazy people". Some workers with low wages may plan to use "welfare benefits" rather than continuing to work in an unpleasant place for low wages.

The impact of some programs may be highly diffuse. The Anti Monopoly Program is one example. Antitrust is actually meant to help maintain competition and prevent monopolies in economic activity, how would one measure its effectiveness? We could look at ongoing enforcement activity and find that certain mergers and price-fixing conspiracies can be solved, but this would tell us little about competition and monopoly in general. It would be better if we could conclude that the economy is n percent more competitive than if there were no such antitrust regulations.

4. *Difficulty in Obtaining Data*

Lacking relevant and statistically accurate data and other information is an imperfection for policy evaluators. Econometric models can estimate the impact of taxes taken from economic activities, but appropriate data to measure the actual economic impact is very difficult to achieve. In many social and economic programs, the question is, "Is someone who receives the program better off than someone who doesn't?" Answering this is not easy. Data difficulties are a major obstacle especially efforts to compare programs intended for certain groups.

5. *Official Resistance*

Policy evaluation, whether it is called policy analysis, a measure of the influence of a policy or something else, must also include a determination regarding the benefits of the policy. This is true even if the evaluator is a university researcher who considers himself or herself objective in seeking knowledge. Problems will arise if agency officials do not pay attention to the political consequences that occur in the evaluation. This can happen if the result is not "favorable" in their eyes. As a result, officials may underestimate or underestimate evaluation studies, deny access to data or not issue new policies for improvement. Regarding official resistance, the evaluation might be much better if it is also supported/controlled by a higher official, who has to make decisions regarding the use of resources between programs and the continuation of the program that has been given. Anticipation is important because we must remember that organizations tend to resist change, while evaluation actually provides change. Organizational inertia can become a barrier to evaluation, through forms of resistance.

In contrast to other stages of the public policy process which relatively receive a lot of attention, the policy evaluation stage often receives less attention, both from implementors and other stakeholders. A program often only stops at the implementation stage, without being followed by the evaluation stage.

Subarsono (2011) made a similar point in detailing the constraints in carrying out policy evaluation more clearly. First, psychological constraints; many government officials are still allergic to evaluation activities, it might hinder their careers. So that many officials view evaluation activities as not an important part of the public policy process. Evaluation is only understood as an additional activity, which may or may not be carried out. Second, economic

constraints; evaluation activities do not require a lot of money, costs for administrative staff, and costs for evaluators. The evaluation process will encounter obstacles without financial support. Third, technical constraints; Evaluators are often faced with the problem of not having enough up to date data and information available. In addition, the existing data is of poor quality, because the supply of data to a higher agency from a lower agency is only seen as a routine activity and a formality without taking into account its substance. Fourth, political constraints; evaluations often collide or even fail for political reasons. Each group may cover up weaknesses in the implementation of a program due to certain political deals or bargaining (Bryant & Raphael, 2015). Fourth, the lack of evaluators. In various government agencies, there is a lack of human resources with the competence to carry out evaluations. This is because an evaluation culture has not yet been created, so the government does not have a clear program to prepare a workforce that has competence in the field of evaluation. So far, the training programs organized by the government have focused more on increasing competence in the field.

Basically a policy evaluation is aimed at seeing the extent to which the implemented policy programs are able to solve public problems. This means that the evaluation aims to see how far the level of effectiveness and efficiency of a policy program has been implemented to solve existing problems. Effective with regard to the method used to solve the problem, while efficient regarding the costs incurred.

Not all public problems can be solved by policy programs or in other words, not all implemented policy programs achieve the desired impact. If conditions like this occur, it will raise the question why the policy program failed to achieve the desired impact? Policy evaluation is useful in looking at the causes of these failures (Winarno, 2008). Policy change and policy termination are the next stages after policy evaluation. After policy problems arise and policy program failures are identified, the next stage in the policy cycle is a change in policy or termination of a policy. However, of course not all policies will cause problems and fail to achieve the desired impact. Therefore, the recommendation put forward is to continue implementing these policy programs.

The concept of policy change refers to replacing an existing policy with one or more other policies. It is rare for public policy to be maintained in the same form as it was originally established. On the other hand, public policy can constantly evolve. Improvements to existing policies depend on several factors, while the factors that influence policy improvements according to Winarno include the extent to which the initial policies are considered capable of solving problems. Basically, public policy is formed to solve public problems. Therefore, an evaluation is carried out to see how far the implemented policies have achieved the desired impact. In this case improving the social conditions that are the target of the policy program. Then the capability by which such policies are administered. Weaknesses that may exist during the policy implementation process. For example, the Indonesian government's policy through KEPPRES No. 8/1980 concerning the clove trading system contains

two important principles, namely first, the clove trading system must pay attention to the interests of farmers so that farmers receive proper income and secondly so that the supply of cloves for PRK needs is guaranteed. However, in the implementation of the following policies the interests of farmers were not fulfilled because farmers did not have adequate bargaining power with clove trading actors, namely cigarette factory entrepreneurs who were members of GAPPRI and BPPC who actually benefited the most from government policies in terms of clove trade. Thus, in its implementation, the government's policy regarding the clove trading system created defects so that the policy should be changed or replaced with a new policy that is better able to guarantee profits to farmers, for example the price of cloves is left directly to the market mechanism. In addition, changes to policies are determined by the political power and awareness of the groups where the policies are aimed. Thus public policy develops after initial formulation and implementation to start the policy process iteratively. The evolution of a public policy is actually a cycle in which policies are formulated, implemented, evaluated and then reformulated based on a legislative review of the extent to which a policy achieves its initial goals.

According to Anderson (1984), policy change takes three forms. The first form is incremental changes to existing policies. As with incremental changes, the existing policies according to this form of change are not completely changed, but only some parts are changed. The second form is the making of new laws for special policies. Third, major policy changes as a result of re-election. In this third case it is often found that the direction of the program or the policy program itself is changed on a large scale because the political elite or the governing regime has changed.

Types and Models of Policy Changes

According to Lester & Steward (n.d.), there are three reasons why policy changes are made where policy changes are becoming an increasingly common feature of policy formulation in contemporary Western political systems, namely:

1. The government has, over the years, gradually expanded its activities in certain policy areas, so there are relatively few activities in which the government can engage. Proposals for new policies may overlap, at least in parts, with existing programs.
2. The policy itself may create conditions that require change because of inadequate or conflicting effects. Erroneous legislative judgments may be grounds for changing policies so they "work better"

The relative level of sustainable economic growth, and the financial implications of existing policy commitments, means that wiggle room to avoid problems of policy termination or policy change by rolling out a new program without cutting the old program is highly unlikely. Even if the government can identify a number of public policies which in its consideration are of no use, wasteful or inappropriate, opinions will always emerge that say that the policies are useful and worth defending. Changing policies is always easier than terminating them.

Based on the possibility that there will be many policy changes in the future, it is necessary to know what forms of policy changes can occur? According to Peters (1986), some changes can take the following forms:

Linear; this form of change includes the direct replacement of a policy by another policy, or a simple change to an existing policy.

1. Consolidation; some policy changes include merging previous policies into a new policy.
2. Splitting; some agencies/agencies (and therefore the final policies of the agencies/agencies) are broken down into two or more components.
3. Nonlinear; some policies are complex and include elements of other types of change.

In addition to the above types of policy changes, there are several models of policy changes. These policy change models can help analysts to understand why important changes in policy can occur in Western political systems, especially the United States (Muttaqin, 2022a; Muttaqin & Harmawan, 2021; Winarno, 2008).

1. The Cyclical Thesis

According to Schlesinger et al. (1986), this model explains that policy change is due to a continuous shift in involvement nationally between public and private interests. In particular, he argues that politics in the United States follows a regular cyclical alternation between liberalism and conservatism. Hence, there is a swing back and forth between periods when national commitment sided with private interests as the best means of dealing with national problems, and periods when national commitment sided with public interests. For example, Franklin Roosevelt launched the New Deal in the 1930's, and John Kennedy introduced the New Frontier in the 1960's and Ronald Reagan ushered in the conservative era in the 1980's.

2. The Evolutionary Policy-Learning Thesis

This model was developed by Sabatier et al. as a conceptual framework of the policy process that views policy change as a function of three factors, the interaction of competing advocacy coalitions within a policy subsystem/community; external changes to the subsystem; and the consequences of stable system parameters (Cairney, 2015). First, understanding the process of policy change and the role of policy learning requires a decade or more of a time perspective. This is to observe a more complete policy cycle (ie from policy formulation to implementation to policy evaluation and change). Second, the most useful way of thinking about policy change over a period of time is to focus on the "policy subsystems" that are made up of "advocacy coalitions" (ie the interactions between actors from different agencies interested in a policy area). Third, public policy can be conceptualized in the same way as "belief systems" (ie a number of priority values and causal assumptions about how to realize them. According to Sabatier, basically policy change is seen as the product of changes in system-wide events, such as socioeconomic disturbances or outputs from other subsystems, and competition among

advocacy coalitions within the subsystems to realize their important beliefs over time as they seek to increase their resource base to respond to opportunities presented by external events, and to learn more much about the policy issues that interest them.

3. The Backlash os Zigzag Thesis

Referring to Winarno (2008), this model was developed by Edwin Amenta and Theda Skocpol. They argue that there is an erratic pattern in the history of US public policy. This pattern is characterized by a "zigzag effect" or stimulus and response (backlash). This is not as much a shift from liberal to conservative as it is a shift from policies that favor one group to policies that benefit another, in backlash. The concept of "class struggles" or coalitions of competing societies is a useful way of explaining these shifts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Experts have provided an accurate foundation for the study and practice of policy evaluation. The results of the research in this article show that the views of experts are focused on how the dynamics of policy issues vary. The same problem may not necessarily be solved using the same approach if the environmental context is different. Likewise, the same problem may not necessarily be solved with the same policy if the time is different. In addition, the main challenges in evaluation studies include the uncertainty of policy objectives, causality relationships, spread of policy influences, difficulties in obtaining data, and official resistance. Meanwhile, the type and model of policy change relies on several reasons. Over the years it has gradually expanded its activities in certain policy areas, so there are relatively few activities in which governments can engage. Proposals for new policies may overlap, at least in parts, with existing programs. In addition, policies may create conditions that require change because of inadequate or conflicting effects. Erroneous legislative judgments may be grounds for changing policy so that it "works better. These models of policy change can help evaluators understand why important changes in policy occur in political systems.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research is limited to an exploratory discussion of policy evaluation. In addition, the important point of this research lies in how policy changes occur which give preference to public policy evaluation studies. Thus, further research needs to investigate further the problems of public policy and policy changes in the future with a locus on an international scale or specifically at the regional level.

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